

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A player-funded ball-based gaming system comprising:

5 a target, said target having a top surface and at least one ball receiver, said ball receiver configured to have a first opening at said top surface of said target and a second opening, said target further comprising a target reader/transmitter, said target reader/transmitter further comprising an entry portion, a guide portion, and an exit portion, where said second opening of said ball receiver is configured
10 to allow operable connection to said entry portion, a first RFID reader configured such that a ball, upon entering said entry portion, will follow said guide portion past said first RFID reader in a readable manner and then exit via said exit portion, and where said target reader/transmitter is operable for communication with at least one server;

15 a second RFID reader configured to read ball RFID tags and extract ball IDs thereby and further configured to be in operable communications with at least one server;

a server operable for communication with said at least one target reader/transmitter and said second RFID reader and configured to make at least
20 one calculation regarding ball and player data using data received by said server from at least one of: said target reader/transmitter; or, said second RFID reader, said server further comprising a database and a program configured to enable play

of at least one game having a player-funded winnings pool;

said database configured to retrievably hold ball IDs in associated with one of: other ball IDs; or, at least one player ID, and further configured to hold data sent by said target reader/transmitter and said second RFID reader, and store said
 5 calculated ball and player data, in a manner retrievable by one of: a player ID; or, a ball ID

2. The system of claim 1 where said first RFID reader is configured such that its antenna coils are wrapped in a tubular manner around said central guide.

3. The system of claim 1 where said second RFID reader is configured such that its antenna coils are wrapped in a tubular manner around a guide, said guide configured to enable a ball to pass through said tubular antenna coils.

4. The system of claim 1 further comprising a sensor located near at least one ball launch area, said sensor configured to detect a ball that is one of: placed on the ball launch area; hit from the ball launch area; or, both placed on, and hit from, the ball-launch area; and is further configured to transmit data about said detected ball to a server.

5. The system of claim 1 further comprising a plurality of servers, where said

plurality of servers are in operable communication with each other, and where one of said plurality of servers further comprises a database, said database configured for player accounts, and further configured to hold one of: target data, ball ID data, detected ball data; or, target data and ball ID data and detected ball data in a manner associated with a player account

6. The system of claim 1 further comprising a plurality of servers, where said plurality of servers are in operable communication with each other, and where one of said plurality of servers further comprises a database, said database configured for storing data in a manner retrievable using ball IDs, and further configured to hold one of: target data, a plurality of ball IDs, detected ball data; or, target data and ball ID data and detected ball data in a manner associated with a ball ID.

7. The system of claim 1 where said at least one server is also configured to be a WWW server, enabled to allow logged in users to retrieve one of: personal ball game data; a plurality of player's ball game data; or, both personal and a plurality of player's ball game data.

8. The system of claim 1 where said target, said first RFID reader, and said second RFID reader are configured to read one of: a golf ball; a basketball; a baseball; or, a football.

9. The system of claim 1 where said program is further configured to play a pari-mutuel game using at least one target.

10. The system of claim 9 where said at least one target further comprises at least
5 one mobile target.

11. The system of claim 1 where said program is further configured to play a progressive pool game using at least one target.

10 12. The system of claim 11 where said at least one target further comprises at least one mobile target.

Sub.a1 > 13. A method of using a ball range system, the ball range system comprising:

(a) a target, said target having a top surface and at least one ball receiver, said

15 ball receiver configured to have a first opening at said top surface of said target and a second opening, said target further comprising a target reader/transmitter, said target reader/transmitter further comprising an entry portion, a guide portion and an exit portion, and where said second opening of said ball receiver is configured to allow operable connection to said entry
20 portion, a first RFID reader configured such that a ball, upon entering said entry portion, will follow said guide portion past said first RFID reader in a

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readable manner and then exit via said exit portion, and where said target reader/transmitter is operable for communication with at least one server;

- (b) a range entry ball RFID reader configured to read ball RFID tags and extract ball IDs thereby and further configured to be in operable communications with at least one server;

- (c) a server operable for communication with said at least one target reader/transmitter and said second RFID reader and configured to calculate ball and player data, said server further comprising a database;

- (d) said database configured to retrievably hold ball IDs in associated with one of: other ball IDs or at least one player ID, and further configured to hold data sent by said target reader/transmitter and said RFID reader, and store said calculated ball and player data, in a manner retrievable by one of: a player ID or a golf ball ID, and further having a program configured to use said database to enable a player to play at least one game having a player-funded pool for distribution to a player upon the occurrence of a winning event;

the method comprising:

providing a set of balls having RFIDs therein, where said set of balls comprises at least one ball;

storing said set of ball IDs on said database;

associating said set of ball IDs with an account on said database;

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allowing said set of balls to be launched from a ball launch area towards at least one target;

gathering data on any hits on any target by said propelled balls;

sending said hit data to a server and retrievably storing it associated with a

5 player ID;

enabling a person having access to said account to retrieve data about said

ball hits and any other data collected pursuant to using said set of balls.

14. The method of claim 13 where said providing a set of balls is a set of

10 purchased for play by a player at a range cashier's station.

15. The method of claim 13 where said providing a set of balls is a set of balls

owned by a player, and brought to the range by said player.

15 16. The method of claim 13 where said associating said set of ball IDs with an

account further comprises associating said set of ball IDs with a specific player account.

17. The method of claim 13 where said associating said set of ball IDs with an

20 account further comprises associating said set of ball IDs with an anonymous player account.

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18. The method of claim 13 where said associating said set of ball IDs with an account further comprises associating said set of ball IDs into a group, said group being accessible using any one of the ball IDs contained in the group.

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19. The method of claim 13 where said gathering data on any hits on any target further comprises:

providing a plurality of targets;

recording data on any ball from said set of balls that reaches any target;

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sending said gathered data to a server;

gathering all sent data in said database;

providing said data to any authorized user, player, or program running on said server.

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15 20. The method of claim 13 where said target, said first RFID reader, and said

second RFID reader are configured to read one of: a golf ball; a basketball; a

~~baseball; or, a football.~~

21. The method of claim 13 where said program is further configured to play a

20 pari-mutuel game using at least one target.

22. The method of claim 21 where said at least one target further comprises at least one mobile target.

23. The method of claim 13 where said program is further configured to play a progressive pool game using at least one target.

24. The method of claim 23 where said at least one target further comprises at least one mobile target.

25. A method of wagering using a ball range having a ball range system, the ball range system comprising:

- (a) a target, said target having a top surface and at least one ball receiver, said ball receiver configured to have a first opening at said top surface of said target and a second opening, said target further comprising a target reader/transmitter, said target reader/transmitter further comprising an entry portion, a guide portion and an exit portion, and where said second opening of said ball receiver is configured to allow operable connection to said entry portion, a first RFID reader configured such that a ball, upon entering said entry portion, will follow said guide portion past said first RFID reader in a readable manner and then exit via said exit portion, and where said target reader/transmitter is operable for communication with at least one server;

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- (b) a range entry ball RFID reader configured to read ball RFID tags and extract ball IDs thereby and further configured to be in operable communications with at least one server;
 - (c) a server operable for communication with said at least one target reader/transmitter and said second RFID reader and configured to calculate ball and player data, said server further comprising a database;
 - (d) said database configured to retrievably hold ball IDs in associated with one of: other ball IDs or at least one player ID, and further configured to hold data sent by said target reader/transmitter and said RFID reader, and store said calculated ball and player data, in a manner retrievable by one of: a player ID or a golf ball ID, and further having a program configured to use said database to enable a player to play at least one game having a player-funded pool for distribution to a pleyer upon the occurrence of a winning event; and,
 - (e) a sensor located near at least one ball launch area, said sensor configured to detect a ball that is placed on the ball launch area and is further configured to transmit data about said detected ball to a server,
- the method comprising:
- reading a set of balls at said range entry golf ball RFID reader;
 - associating a player with said read set of balls;
 - accepting payment from a player for a wager, said wager based on using

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said set of read balls;

allowing said player to go to a ball-launch area;

recording in said database output from said sensor each time a ball is placed
in said ball launch area;

5 recording each a ball from said set of read balls hits a target; and,

determining if said set of read balls have been played and if said set of read
balls comprise a winning event.

26. The method of claim 25 where said associating a player with said read set of
10 balls further comprises associating a player ID with said read set of balls.

27. The method of claim 25 where said associating a player with said read set of
balls further comprises associating an anonymous player ID with said read set of
balls.

15 28. The method of claim 25 where said target, said first RFID reader, and said
second RFID reader are configured to read one of: a golf ball; a basketball; a
baseball; or, a football.

20 29. The method of claim 25 where said program is further configured to play a
pari-mutuel game using at least one target.

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30. The method of claim 29 where said at least one target further comprises at least one mobile target.

5 31. The method of claim 25 where said program is further configured to play a progressive pool game using at least one target.

32. The method of claim 31 where said at least one target further comprises at least one mobile target.

10 33. A method of creating enhanced player interest at a ball range having a ball range system, the ball range system comprising:

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- (a) a target, said target having a top surface and at least one ball receiver, said ball receiver configured to have a first opening at said top surface of said target and a second opening, said target further comprising a target reader/transmitter, said target reader/transmitter further comprising an entry portion, a guide portion and an exit portion, and where said second opening of said ball receiver is configured to allow operable connection to said entry portion, a first RFID reader configured such that a ball, upon entering said entry portion, will follow said guide portion past said first RFID reader in a readable manner and then exit

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via said exit portion, and where said target reader/transmitter is operable for communication with at least one server;

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(b) a range entry ball RFID reader configured to read ball RFID tags and extract ball IDs thereby and further configured to be in operable communications with at least one server;

(c) a server operable for communication with said at least one target reader/transmitter and said second RFID reader and configured to calculate ball and player data, said server further comprising a database;

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(d) said database configured to retrievably hold ball IDs in associated with one of: other ball IDs or at least one player ID, and further configured to hold data sent by said target reader/transmitter and said RFID reader, and store said calculated ball and player data, in a manner retrievable by one of: a player ID or a ball ID, and further having a program configured to use said database to enable a player to play at least one game having a player-funded pool for distribution to a player upon the occurrence of a winning event,

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the method comprising:

providing player-funded pools for games on which a player may wager an amount;

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displaying games and associated player-funded pool amounts in a manner visible to a player;

Sub. a4) updating said player-funded pool amounts as said games are being played
by players; and,
displaying amounts won by players upon the occurrence of game winning
events.

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34. The method of claim 33 where said target, said first RFID reader, and said
second RFID reader are configured to read one of: a golf ball; a basketball; a
baseball; or, a football.

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35. The method of claim 34 where said program is further configured to play a
pari-mutuel game using at least one target.

36. The method of claim 35 where said at least one target further comprises at
least one mobile target.

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37. The method of claim 34 where said program is further configured to play a
progressive pool game using at least one target.

38. The method of claim 37 where said at least one target further comprises at

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least one mobile target.